



State of Wisconsin  
Jim Doyle, Governor

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent



\*\*\***NEWS RELEASE**\*\*\*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, June 1, 2009

CONTACT: Carla Vigue, Office of the Governor  
(608) 261-2162 / [carla.vigue@wisconsin.gov](mailto:carla.vigue@wisconsin.gov)

Patrick Gasper, DPI Communications Officer  
(608) 266-3559 / [patrick.gasper@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:patrick.gasper@dpi.wi.gov)

## Wisconsin joins Common Core Standards initiative to transform education

MADISON—Governor Jim Doyle and State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster announced today that Wisconsin is among 49 states and territories that have joined the Common Core Standards initiative.

The state-led initiative will develop core academic content standards for English language arts and mathematics for kindergarten through 12th-grade students. The standards will align with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and be internationally benchmarked. The Common Core Standards will build on work states already have done in developing English language arts and mathematics standards.

Wisconsin is one of 35 states currently working with the American Diploma Project to align state standards with college and career expectations. Additionally, Wisconsin joined the Partnership for 21st Century Skills in 2007 to strengthen content standards and infuse 21st century competencies, such as information and communication technology literacy, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, global awareness, and business, economic and civic literacy, into the curriculum.

"We live in an interconnected world," Doyle said. "We must do all we can to ensure that our students have all the tools and skills they need when they graduate to compete in the global economy. By joining the Common Core Standards initiative, working with the National Governor's Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, and other states, we are developing common standards that will allow us to see how our students perform in the international community."

"Our work with the American Diploma Project and Partnership for 21st Century Skills is a foundation for transforming education in Wisconsin," Burmaster said. "The broad commitment of states to having common core standards for each grade level, along with our other standards development work, will serve our students and local communities well. This process will define rigor, not through wider and

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shallower content, but through essential content and skills students will need for employment and postsecondary study.”

Burmester noted that Wisconsin convened leaders of business, economic development, and chambers of commerce in 2007 to ask their perspectives on the knowledge and skills a current eighth-grader should develop to be prepared to enter the workforce in five to ten years. Information from that Business Summit, along with partnerships with higher education, is guiding revision of the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in English language arts and mathematics to ensure students acquire deeper understanding and know how to apply 21st century knowledge and skills. Wisconsin’s new standards for English language arts and mathematics will be presented this summer.

For the Common Core Standards initiative, a Standards Development Group already has begun drafting standards for English language arts and mathematics. These standards will begin with end of high school expectations, due in July, followed by core standards at each grade level, which are expected to be completed by December 2009. A committee, selected by state governors and chiefs, will review the rigor of the standards to ensure they are research- and evidence-based. Partners in the effort intend for the final product to be easily understood by teachers, parents, and policymakers.

“We need academic standards that clearly define expectations for students,” Burmaster said. “The Common Core Standards will help the education community align instructional materials, textbooks, digital media, and curriculum. Common Core Standards will help states provide professional development based on identified need and best practices and will provide a framework to develop assessment systems that measure student performance against the common core.”

The U.S. Department of Education supports state-level leadership for standards development. Comment periods are planned after standards are made public. The Common Core Standards are a voluntary effort for states led by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. States adopting the common core may do so directly, may choose to include additional state standards beyond the common core, or may choose to align their standards to the common core, with the common core representing 85 percent of the state’s standards in English language arts and mathematics. An additional goal for the Common Core Standards initiative is to establish an ongoing development process that supports continuous improvement based on research and evidence-based learning.

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**NOTES:** This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2009\\_59.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2009_59.pdf). The national news release from the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers is available at [http://www.ccsso.org/whats\\_new/press\\_releases/index.cfm](http://www.ccsso.org/whats_new/press_releases/index.cfm). Information on Wisconsin’s standards review process is available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/cal/englangarts.html>.